

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2015

The Honorable Roberta S. Jacobson
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20521

Mr. Ricardo Zuniga
Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs
National Security Council
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Assistant Secretary Jacobson and Mr. Zuniga:

We are writing to express our strong opposition to allowing the Cuban communist dictatorship to open an embassy in Washington, D.C., or any consular offices elsewhere in the United States, and to request a briefing immediately from your offices, updating us on the status of these negotiations.

We believe that allowing the Castro regime to open an embassy in Washington, or consulates elsewhere in the United States, would be detrimental to U.S. interests. We are all too familiar with the Castro regime's efforts to utilize their diplomats as intelligence agents tasked with the goal of committing espionage against their host countries. The Cuban regime's track record has illustrated that it is not a responsible actor in accordance with international norms and agreements. We believe that allowing Cuba to open an embassy in Washington, D.C. or consulates will further open the door for their espionage activities. With that in mind, it is important to note that:

- in 1998, 3 Cuban diplomats were expelled for their role in the "WASP Network" espionage ring;
- in 2000, the U.S. expelled Cuban Interests Section Vice Consul Jose Imperatori for his engagement in espionage activities;
- in 2002, Cuban spy at the Defense Intelligence Agency Ana Belen Montes plead guilty for conspiracy to commit espionage and is currently serving a 25-year sentence in federal prison;
- in 2002, 4 Cuban diplomats were expelled from the U.S., including Gustavo Machin Gomez, who is now part of the Castro negotiation team with the U.S. and was received at the State Department last month;
- in 2003, 14 Cuban diplomats were expelled for inappropriate and unacceptable activities deemed harmful to the United States, including the husband of Cuban spy and leader of Castro regime's negotiating team Josefina Vidal;
- in 2006, Florida International University professors Carlos and Elsa Alvarez were convicted for espionage activities for the Cuban dictatorship;
- in 2009, retired State Department officials Walter Kendall Myers and his wife Gwendolyn Myers pleaded guilty for conspiracy to commit espionage on behalf of the Castro regime; and
- in 2013, the Department of Justice unsealed a one-count indictment for Marta Rita Velazquez, an employee for the U.S. Agency for International Development, for conspiracy to commit espionage but fled to Sweden to avoid prosecution.

These are just a few examples that illustrate the dangers of allowing the Cuban communist regime to open an embassy in Washington, D.C. or consulates in the United States.

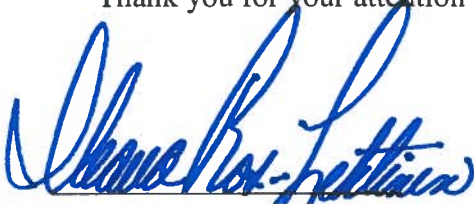
On February 4, 2015, the House Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing to discuss the administration's policies toward Cuba. Before the hearing, we requested a briefing with you that did not materialize. Further, the White House did not make Mr. Zuniga available for this hearing, although he was requested. Assistant Secretary Jacobson conveyed that a briefing will occur sometime in the near future but to date, no briefing has occurred.

We are profoundly concerned where the negotiations to normalize relations with Cuba will lead. Administration officials have engaged the Cuban regime in rounds of talks, and outside parties have been briefed in detail about the status of those negotiations. However, as Members of Congress, we have not received the same courtesy. We were appalled that the Administration did not consult with any of us before the December 17, 2014 announcement. And, to date, after three rounds of talks spanning three months, we have yet to meet with anyone from the Administration to explain the current status of negotiations.

As such, within all applicable rules and regulations, we respectfully request a briefing for those Members who fully understand the true nature of the Castro regime. We are deeply troubled that the administration is pursuing a dangerous path that will undermine U.S. national security and introduce a threat into the heart of our nation's Capital and wherever consular offices might be established.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Member of Congress



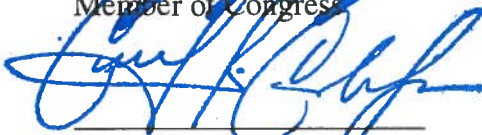
TED CRUZ
U.S. Senator



MARIO DIAZ-BALART
Member of Congress



ALBIO SIRES
Member of Congress



CARLOS CURBELO
Member of Congress